

Written Testimony

Tom Delaney, Director of Government Affairs, Professional Landcare Network

SB 914, An Act Concerning the Application of Pesticides at Municipal Parks

SB 916, An Act Authorizing Civil Penalties for the Faulty, Careless or Negligent Application of Pesticides

SB 917, An Act Authorizing the Use of Certain Microbial and Biochemical Pesticides and Grub Control Products on School Grounds

HB 6440, An Act Concerning Municipalities and the Application of Lawn Care Pesticides

Monday, February 25, 2013

Environment Committee

Sen. Meyer, Rep. Gentile, Sen. Chapin, Rep. Shaban, and members of the Environment Committee:

I appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments on Senate Bills 914, 916, 917 and House Bill 6440.

I am writing on behalf of the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) and our Connecticut members urging you not move forward with these proposals.

PLANET is the national trade association representing more than 100,000 landscape industry professionals, who create and maintain healthy, green living spaces for communities across America. PLANET members are committed to the highest standards in industry education, best practices, and business professionalism.

I have been involved in the pesticide arena for almost 30 years, much of that time spent as a state pesticide regulator. I am very familiar with all federal and state regulations of pesticides, including those affecting lawn and landscape pesticide use. The green industry supports reasonable or responsible legislation when needed. These bills are not reasonable or responsible as written. Mandated systems are in place that require testing, registration, and use restrictions for any product classified as a pesticide at the federal and state levels. Systems also exist to license users of these products on a commercial basis for hire in all states for good reasons.

The Connecticut Environmental Council (CTEC) is a member of PLANET as is many of its members. We support the testimony this morning of Mike Wallace, board member of CTEC.

Specifically, PLANET opposes:

SB 914, which would expand the ban to include all municipal parks.

SB 916, which seeks to impose penalties on applicators. This legislation is unnecessary because under a DEEP regulation currently scheduled for a final vote before the Regulation Review Committee on Tuesday, there is a process and procedures in place to respond to complaints. This legislation is duplicative and unnecessary.

HB 6440, which seeks to repeal a longstanding law that establishes a statewide preemption on municipalities from adopting their own rules regarding the regulation of pesticides. Connecticut's preemption law has been in place for 30 years as has many other states preemption laws. Under the current law, municipalities rely on the expertise of the Pesticide Division of DEEP to provide guidance on issues related to pest control, these products, and their use. This system works throughout the country with the needs requirements being established at the state level.

PLANET supports the formation of a **task force or working group** that will review the impact of the ban on pesticide use and report back in time for enactment of legislation during the 2014 session of the General Assembly. This task force should be based in science and must include representatives from DEEP's Pesticide Division, the UConn School of Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Station, various municipal organizations, as well as the licensed professionals directly responsible for maintaining school grounds at every level in both the public and private sectors.

Finally, with regards to **SB 917**, which would permit very specific products to be used to address grub control, PLANET believes it is bad public policy to draft legislation that carves out an exception for one EPA-registered product. We strongly recommend that this proposed legislation be amended to sunset on January 1, 2014, and that the legislation be part of a comprehensive discussion that would occur during the working group or task force on pest controls. PLANET recognizes that because municipalities are unable to use EPA-registered pest controls, they have been without the tools to control grub populations, causing some fields not to be able to be used.

In conclusion, PLANET respectfully request that you not move forward with these proposals and support a collaborative balanced task force that will report back prior to the start of the 2014 session.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide you with this testimony.